

University of Northern Colorado
College of Osteopathic Medicine

Policy: Class Attendance Policy

Responsible Party: UNC COM Curriculum Committee

COCA Standard: 9.2

Review Frequency: Annually and as needed

At the University of Northern Colorado College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNC COM), we strive to provide a learning environment that promotes both academic success and professional development. Attendance is required for many educational activities and strongly encouraged for all others. *As future healthcare providers, students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, including punctuality, preparedness, and active participation in all educational activities. Regular attendance, particularly for required sessions, demonstrates a commitment to the profession and patient care.* Regardless of their attendance, students are responsible for content covered during **ALL** learning activities.

1. Attendance Expectations:

Course and Clinical Rotation syllabi will clearly outline the attendance expectations for educational activities. Note that some clinical, laboratory, and other experiences are impossible to make-up without repeating the entire course and/or academic year.

Excused Absences

Reasons for excused absence include, but are not limited to:

- Personal Illness
- Family emergencies/illnesses
- Approved professional development activities (e.g., conferences, presentations)
- COMLEX-USA examination
- Religious Holy Days
- Military Service

Any reason for absence not listed above will be considered unexcused unless otherwise decided by the **Director/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs**.

The following outlines UNC COM attendance requirements:

1.1. Optional Attendance

Attendance for lectures and large group discussions is **optional but highly recommended**. These sessions are designed to provide students with foundational knowledge and the opportunity to engage with faculty and peers in a structured learning environment. While attendance is not mandatory, participation in these sessions is strongly encouraged to enhance understanding of course material, facilitate peer learning, and prepare students for clinical practice. In all cases of absence, students are responsible for all content, material, and learning activities missed. Instructors are not required to provide make-up learning activities for students absent from optional activities. [OBJ][OBJ]

Unless otherwise specified in the syllabus, optional sessions include:

- Didactic Lectures
- Large Group Discussions
- Guest Speaker Presentations
- Online Synchronous Learning Sessions

1.2. Mandatory Attendance

Attendance at small group sessions, hands-on learning activities, clinical rotations, and examinations is **mandatory**. These sessions are critical for the development of clinical skills, teamwork, application of theoretical knowledge in practical situations, and demonstration of competency. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in these sessions. **All mandatory sessions will be indicated in the course syllabus.**

Preclinical mandatory sessions include, but are not limited to:

- **Team-Based Learning (TBL):** Structured sessions where students work collaboratively on case studies and exercises.
- **Case-Based Learning (CBL):** Small group discussions focused on clinical case scenarios.
- **Problem-Based Learning (PBL):** Sessions where students collaboratively solve clinical problems with minimal faculty guidance
- **Labs:** Sessions involving hands-on practice in anatomy, physiology, OPP or clinical examination and procedures.

Clinical Rotation Attendance

- Attendance is required for all activities assigned at clinical sites where students engage in patient care under the supervision of faculty and clinical preceptors.

Examination Attendance

- Attendance is mandatory at all course examinations and at clinical rotation shelf examinations.

2. Absence Reporting Process

2.1. Absence from Mandatory Preclinical Sessions

Students must notify the Course Director (or designee) of a planned absence 4 weeks in advance of the absence through the procedure specified within the course syllabus. If an absence is related to an acute illness or emergency, notification should occur as soon as is feasible. Other requests for excused absence may be considered at the discretion of the Director/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. In all cases, appropriate documentation may be required.

Students will be responsible for contacting the course director to discuss any potential options to make up missed sessions or assignments.

For preclinical courses, the number of absences from mandatory sessions are permitted as follows without prior approval from Student Affairs:

- Up to three (3) days for courses equal to or greater than five (5) credit hours
- Up to two (2) days for courses less than five (5) credit hours

Absences that exceed the allocated amounts must be approved by the Director/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

2.2. Absence from Clinical Rotations:

Requests for excused absences from a clinical rotation should be rare. If such a request is necessary, it must be submitted **at least 30 days prior to the start of the rotation** to the student's **Clinical Coordinator**. The Clinical Coordinator will forward the request to the appropriate **Clinical Rotation Director** for review. If an absence is related to an acute illness or emergency, notification should occur as soon as is feasible. If warranted, the Clinical Rotation Director may escalate any absence request to the **Associate Dean for Clinical Education** for final consideration. In all cases, appropriate documentation may be required.

See Clinical Rotation Manual for more information.

- A maximum of three (3) days may be approved during a four-week rotation.

Absences that exceed the allocated amount must be approved by the Director/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

2.3. Absence from Examinations:

Absence from any course or clinical rotation examination must be submitted no later than 4 weeks prior to the absence. If an absence is related to an acute illness or emergency, notification should occur as soon as is feasible. All such absence requests require approval by the **Director/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs**. Students must then work with the Course Director, Clinical Rotation Director, or their designee to schedule an alternative time for the examination.

3. Consequences

Failure to request or report an absence to any mandatory session may result in academic penalties, including but not limited to grade deductions, the requirement to complete make-up assignments, or failure of the course component.

Professional Conduct: Unexcused absences or lack of participation may lead to disciplinary actions, referrals to Student Affairs, or referrals to the Professionalism Committee.

4. Special Circumstances

- **Conference Attendance:** Students in good academic standing may be approved to attend no more than one (1) medical conference or advocacy event per academic year. Exceptions may be granted to students serving on the Student Government Executive Council. If approved, a maximum of three (3) days may be excused for conference attendance, including travel days.
- **Religious Holy Days:** Students may be absent from class to observe a recognized religious holy day. Such absences must be requested and approved in advance. Students will be permitted to make up examinations or complete assignments without academic penalty, in accordance with Colorado Revised Statutes § 23-1-146. Religious holy day absences will count toward the overall absence limit; however, exceeding the limit due solely to religious observance will not, by itself, result in academic penalty. Additional accommodations will be provided as needed to ensure compliance with state law.
- **Military Service:** Students may be absent from class to participate in **active military service**, including time required for associated travel. These absences **must be requested and approved in advance**. Students will be allowed to make up any examinations or assignments missed due to military service, as determined by the course director. **These absences will not count toward the overall absence limits** specified in the attendance policy.
- **Health-Related Absences:** Students who require time away from class for **routine healthcare** or to **recover from or receive treatment for an acute or chronic illness** will be allowed the time necessary for treatment and recovery. Besides notifying the course director of their absence, students are encouraged to contact the **UNC Disability Resource Center** for guidance and to explore short-term accommodations, if appropriate. If a student's illness or treatment needs result in absences that **exceed the allowable number** based on course credit hours, they must inform the **Director/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs** (or designee) to discuss additional support or necessary academic arrangements.
- **Chronic Medical Conditions:** Students who anticipate an extended absence or require accommodations due to a chronic medical condition should proactively consult with the UNC Disability Resource Center to arrange appropriate accommodations.